

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SYE-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
MCT-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 USSS-00
OPR-02 A-01 /038 W
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P 160725Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7362
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

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KUWAIT FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, TC
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE TERRORIST THREAT AGAINST INSTALLATIONS IN UAE

1. THROUGH EMBASSY OIC DUBAI, WHO OBTAINED IT FROM LOCAL BANK SOURCE, WE HAVE RECEIVED TEXT OF ANONYMOUS LETTER SENT TO MANAGER OF BRITISH BANK OF THE MIDDLE EAST (BBME) IN ABU DHABI ON FEB 7, 1978. LETTER THREATENS UNSPECIFIED ACTIONS AGAINST "BANK", REFINERY, ADNOC (ABU DHABI NATIONAPSOIUA COMPANY), PETROLEUM DIVNS ONSIC) UNLESS UAEG AGREES ISSUE PASSPORTS TO PALESTINIANS AND PAY DH 50 MILLION. ALTHOUGH UNSIGNED, LETTER PURPORTS TO COME FROM SELF-DESCRIBED "PALESTINIAN LEFT WING GUERRILLA GROUP CRUEL FACTION" BASED IN ABU DHABI AND CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR BANK ROBBERY AT BBME'S ELECTRA ROAD BRANCH IN ABU DHABI ON FEB 6 IN WHICH CURRENCY AND TRAVELLERS CHECKS STOLEN AS WELL AS OCT 25, 1977 MURDER OF UAE MINISTER OF STATE SAIF GHUBBASH.

2. MANAGER OF BBME ABU DHABI HAS CONFIRMED TO US THAT LETTER WAS SENT TO HIM AND APPEARED HAVE BEEN POSTMARKED ON FEB 7 WHICH WAS DAY AFTER ROBBERY OF BBME BRANCH IN ABU DHABI. MANAGER
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DESCRIBED HANDWRITING ON ENVELOPE AS "CRUDE" AND IN POOR ENGLISH. TEXT CONTAINS MANY MISPELLINGS AND GRAMMAR FAULTS. ORIGINAL WAS TURNED OVER BY BBME TO ABU DHABI POLICE WHO ARE INVESTIGATING. MANAGER HAS TOLD US THAT BBME CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO TAKE THE LETTER SERIOUSLY BUT IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW LETTER IS NOT FROM PALESTINIANS ("THEY USUALLY WRITE BETTER ENGLISH") AND APPEARS BE RATHER

CRUDE EXTORTION ATTEMPT OR EVEN A HOAX.

3. TEXT OF LETTER DATED FEB 2, 1978 FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: THE MANAGER, BRITISH BANK OF THE MIDDLE EAST,
ABU DHABI, UAE.
DEAR YOUR MANAGER,

YOU KNOW WHO DONE THE ROBBERY IN YOUR BANK IN BRANCH ROAD
ELECTRA. IT IS WE THE PALESTINIANS LEFT WING GURRILLA (SIC)
GROUP CRUEL FACTION OPERATING IN UAE HEAD OFFICE IN ABUDHABI.
WE HAVE DO BEFORE KILLING OF MINISTER GOBBASH THIS IS OUR KIND
INITIATIVE IN ABU DHABI.

WE BEFORE WRITE SHAIKH ZIAD (SIC) TO BE CAREFUL MORE CHAOS
AND DISASTERS HE COULD EXPECT.

THIS IS ONLY BEGINING (SIC). WE WILL DO MANY THINGS AGAINST
BANKS, REFINERY, ADNOC, PETROLEUM DIVNS (SIC). AND SHALL
TRY MAXIMUM TO REMOVE THIS GOVERNMENT FROM WHOLE UAE. OTHERWISE
UAE GOVERNMENT MUST GIVE US UAE PASSPORTS AND APPROVE ME PEOPLE
AS SAME CONTRY (SIC) MEN. THEN NO PROBLEM. NOBODY CAN DETECT
US WE ARE EVERYWHERE AND SUCH LARGE.

BUT TRAVELLERS CHEQUES WE ROBBED WE MISTAKEN WE WILL BURN
THEM. NOT GIVE YOU. THIS ACTION ONLY BEGINING. WE WILL DO
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ONE BY ONE.

TELL YOUR BIG SHAKS (PRESUMABLY SHAIKHS) AND MANAGERS WHAT THEY
CAN DO.

WE WANT 50 MILLIN DIRHAMS AND WANT SEE IN ITTIHAD NEW(S) PAPER
WE PALESTINIANS HAVE AGREEMENT TO ISSUE PASSPORTS AND SEPARATE
SETTLEMENT IN MISAFEEEE MUSAFA OF SOME WHERE IN ABU DHABI. WE
MUST SEE THIS IN AL ITTIHAD THEN ONLY WE WILL LEAVE MORE PROBLEMS.
END QUOTE.

4. COMMENT: BBME BRANCH WAS ROBBED BY FOUR ARABIC-SPEAKING
GUNMEN DRESSED IN LOCAL GARB. AS BANK EMPLOYEES WERE ALL
INDIANS, THEY WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY WHETHER ROBBERS SPOKE
WITH PALESTINIAN ACCENTS OR NOT. GUNMEN ARE BELIEVED BE STILL AT
LARGE. WE AS WELL AS LOCAL POLICE ARE INCLINED TO BE SKEPTICAL
ABOUT VALIDITY OF LETTER BUT HAVE NEVERTHELESS QUIETLY ALERTED
HEADS OF AMERICANBANKS, OIL COMPANIES, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS TO
ITS EXISTANCE WITH SUGGESTION THEY MAY WISH TO TIGHTEN THEIR
OWN SECURITY MEASURES. LETTER DOES NOT MENTION THIS OR OTHER
DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AS TARGETS BUT WE HAVE ALSO TAKEN ROUTINE
IN-HOUSE PRECAUTIONS TO INCREASE VIGILANCE. EMBASSY FILES SHOW NO

TRACES ON ANY PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION OR FACTION WITH NAME
SIMILAR TO THAT SHOWN IN LETTER. PALESTINIAN GROUP RESPONSIBLE
FOR MURDER OF SAIF GHUBBASH WAS OF COURSE THAT SPLINTER GROUP
HEADED BY "ABU NIDAL" AND BASED IN BAGHDAD.

DICKMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: BOMBING, THREATS, BANKS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
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TAGS: ASEC, PINS, TC
To: STATE
Type: TE
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